



## Working on the Holidays

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, December 31, 2007

When it comes to the holidays, many of us expect to have them off. Whether it's Hanukah, Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, etc., the assumption is that the holidays are automatically a day off of work or that one can request religious days off and the request is granted. However, this is not always the case.

My early work experiences included jobs that were "open" on the holidays. For example, when I had a paper route at age 13, I could not take a paid vacation or not deliver the paper on a holiday. If I went on a family vacation I would have to pay someone to "sub" my route. When I worked in the restaurant industry starting in high school, I would make money only if I physically showed up and worked my shift.

These early work experiences have caused me to reflect this season about the many occupations that do not stop for the holidays in San Jose. Doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel, sewage treatment plant workers, and PG&E crews, among others, work during the holidays. Although I have not needed their services, thankfully, I appreciate that they are present and prepared.

Two specific professions that work year round are our police and fire departments. I think I speak for everyone when I say that police and fire are two professions that go above the call of duty.

I attended the police briefing on both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The police department has three shifts each day. Each shift is given a briefing at the police station where the watch commander will do roll call and inform the new shift about the latest happenings, like keep a lookout for this car or this person. The briefing reminded me of the opening scenes of the 80's cop show Hill Street Blues and the quote, "Let's be careful out there." After the meeting, the police grab their cars and their shot guns and go on patrol. This was my first time attending a briefing and I found it interesting and informative.

I also visited the fire stations in the district I represent. I went to each firehouse on Christmas Day to greet our fire fighters and thank them for their service.

A "thank you" is in order for all who work on the holidays and a "very special thank you" to our public safety officers. We value your service.

Have a safe and joyous New Year!

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